



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FRENCH GULCH, California	Accident Number:	LAX91LA400
Date & Time:	September 20, 1991, 14:51 Local	Registration:	N6414P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-250	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT DEPARTED NUT TREE AIRPORT, VACAVILLE, CA, FOR A 1-HOUR FLIGHT TO TRINITY CENTER, CA WITH 10 GALLONS OF FUEL. WHEN THE AIRPLANE WAS 41 MINUTES INTO THE FLIGHT THE ENGINE POWER CEASED AND THE PILOT EXECUTED AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN A SMALL BRUSHED COVERED FIELD. DURING THE LANDING ROLL THE AIRPLANE'S RIGHT WING COLLIDED WITH A MANZANITA BUSH. THE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THERE WAS NO FUEL REMAINING IN ANY OF THE FUEL TANKS.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO REFUEL BEFORE DEPARTING ON THE ACCIDENT FLIGHT. CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ACCIDENT WAS THE HIGH VEGETATION AND FUEL EXHAUSTION.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. SINGLE ENGINE AIRCRAFT
 2. (F) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
 3. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 6, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	646 hours (Total, all aircraft), 68 hours (Total, this make and model), 646 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 42 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N6414P
Model/Series:	PA-24-250 PA-24-250	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-1524
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 1, 1991 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	44 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3154 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	RAAB, MARK L.	Rated Power:	250 Horsepower
Operator:	RAAB, MARK L.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	VACAVILLE , CA (045)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	TRINITY CENTER , CA (086)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.729637,-122.60086(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Llorente, Abdon
Additional Participating Persons:	FAA; SACRAMENTO , CA
Original Publish Date:	March 24, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27363

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).